

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9394

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

COSMUSMACTHAI BKK

UNCLAS BANGKOK 16518

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, TH

SUBJECT: STUDENT SYMPATHY RALLY OVER ARRESTS OF
NORTHERN ACTIVISTS II

REF: BANGKOK 16510

1. PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT PRAMOT CONTINUED THE GOVERNMENT'S PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE STUDENT RALLY AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY WHICH WAS CALLED IN SUPPORT OF THE NINE FARMER AND STUDENT ACTIVISTS ARRESTED IN LAMPHUN PROVINCE ON AUGUST 3. IN A NATIONALLY TELEVIZED ADDRESS TO THE NATION FRIDAY NIGHT, KHUKRIT PROMISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO SOLVE THE SERIES OF MURDERS OF NORTHERN FARMER ACTIVISTS. KHUKRIT ADMITTED THAT THE BELATED ARRESTS OF NINE FARMER AND STUDENT ACTIVISTS CAME AT A BAD TIME, YET HE REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO SEE THE CASE THROUGH COURT.

2. THE BANGKOK PRESS IS ASSISTING THE GOVERNMENT
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PUBLICITY EFFORT BY DOWNPLAYING THE NUMBER OF

PEOPLE ATTENDING THE RALLY AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY.
THE RALLY ITSELF IS NOT SNOWBALLING, AND SOME UNIVERSITIES
HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WILL NO LONGER PARTICIPATE.

3. ON AUGUST 9 RECTORS AND DEPUTY RECTORS FROM SIX
BANGKOK UNIVERSITIES MET AT THAMMASAT TO WORK
OUT A COMPROMISE THAT WOULD BRING THE RALLY TO AN
END. THAT MEETINGS PROPOSALS, WHICH THE PRESS REPORTS
WILL GO TO PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT ON AUGUST 11, ARE
PARTICULARLY MILD. THIS IS ANOTHER INDICATION THAT THE
RALLY ORGANIZERS ARE NOT GETTING THE PUBLIC SUPPORT
THEY NEED TO REALLY PRESSURE THE GOVERNMENT.

4. THE LATE EVENING NEWS AUGUST 10 SHOWS PRIME
MINISTER KHUKRIT CASTING HIS BALLOT IN THE BANGKOK
PROVINCIAL ELECTION. THIS DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE,
COMBINED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S COOLNESS THROUGH-
OUT THE PRESENT ACTIVIST RALLY AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY,
FURTHER COMMUNICATES TO THE THAI PUBLIC THE GOVERN-
MENT'S CONFIDENCE THAT IT HAS THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND.
WHITEHOUSE

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